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ABSTRACT

This study of the present and future library needs of residents of Stafford County, Virginia, with emphasis on the North Stafford areas, includes a review of demographic statistics and recommendations for library services. The currently increasing population is highly dependent on the automobile for transportation, and recommendations for library service include increased hours to reflect the commuting pattern and this dependence. It is also recommended that collection growth and programming should reflect the increase in the high school enrollment, and that guidelines for school-branch library cooperation should be very carefully spelled out and new areas for cooperation explored. Initial programming in North Stafford should strongly reflect cooperation with existing clubs and interest groups in the area. Examination of the public library organization, staff, budgeting, facilities, and collection indicate that renovation and/or expansion of the main library facility is necessary in order to keep pace with the needs of the North Stafford Branch and any other branches, either current or projected. Library programs, reference services, and bookmobile services will increase with this trend in county growth. A history of Stafford County and bibliography are appended. (CWM)

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COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Central Rappahannock Regional Library
1201 Caroline Street
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401

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August, 1978

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COMMUNITY ANALYSIS - STAFFORD COUNTY, VIRGINIA

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This study was undertaken in order to identify the present and future needs of Stafford County residents, with particular emphasis on the North Stafford area, where a branch library of 1800 square feet and open forty hours a week opens in September, 1978. The study was an outgrowth of a Community Analysis Workshop sponsored by the Virginia State Library and conducted by the Community Analysis Research Institute of the University of Denver Graduate School of Library Science.

Methodology

The methodology for the collection and analysis of much of this material was suggested by the Institute leaders. The information used was gathered from a variety of sources and are listed in the Bibliography. A great number of people were helpful in this endeavor including staff members, Trustees, and members of the League of Women Voters.

A major difficulty in the analysis of Stafford County has been one of definition. Stafford's activities and interests are interwoven with Fredericksburg's and, to some degree, the other jurisdictions of the planning district. Fredericksburg absorbs many Staffordeans into churches, clubs, and other organizations. In some cases the figures were imprecise or just not there. In terms of an analysis of library resources, in our case a system of shared resources, somewhat the same problems emerge. We have done our best to extract the Stafford facts, and then further, whenever possible, to identify those which are

pertinent to the North Stafford area.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF COUNTY

History

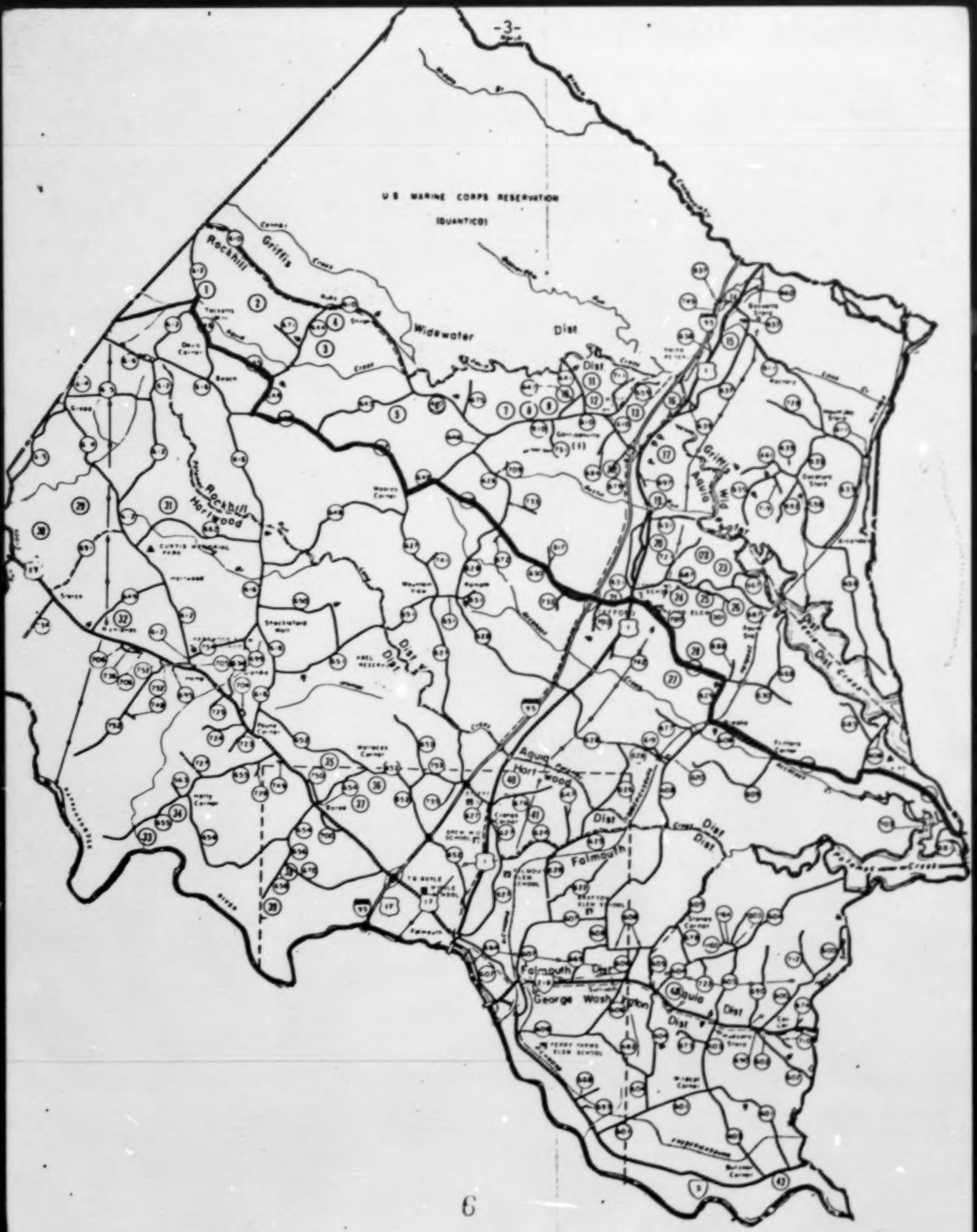
Catherine K. Walker, a Creative Arts Specialist for the Stafford County Schools has contributed the section on the history of the County. It is an excellent piece of work and we feel, because of its length in relation to the other sections, it belongs in an Appendix. You will find it on page 26 .

Setting and Physical Characteristices (see map)

Stafford County is situated 40 miles south of Washington and sixty miles north of Richmond in what is termed the urban corridor. The County is bordered by Prince William County on the North; the City of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County on the South; Fauquier County and Culpeper County on the West; and the Potomac River and King George County on the East. The land is gently rolling and lies, with the exception of Coastal Plain at the east, in the Piedmont Plateau. The land area is 271 square miles or 173,400 acres. A portion of Prince William Park and the Quantico Marine Corps Reservation extend over the northern area. The County lies within the Potomac River Basin and is drained by the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers.

North Stafford is that area bordered at the North by Prince William County to the west by Fauquier, and the east by the Potomac. For purposes of this study, we have identified the southern boundary as a diagonal line leading from Rt. 621 on the east through the Court House, west to 646 and Fauquier County. The area includes 11 enumeration districts and approximately 1/3 of the land area of the County.

In the immediate area of the branch or. 610, are numerous sub-


U S MARINE CORPS RESERVATION
(QUANTICO)
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Hartwood
Aquia
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Falmouth
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George Washington
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divisions, an elementary school, and 2½ miles away, the site of the new high school. Commercial development is beginning. The Branch itself is located in a new office-park complex and across Rt. 610 the first real shopping center for North Stafford is under construction. According to a Ten Year Plan developed in 1974 by Mr. William Chamberlain, Library Consultant for the Virginia State Library, this is the preferred location for the establishment of a branch library.

Transportation

The main artery in Stafford County is Interstate 95 running from Richmond to Washington through the middle of the County. Three interchanges provide access, Rt. 17 near Fredericksburg, Rt. 630 at Stafford Court House, and Rt. 610 in North Stafford. This last interchange is about a mile south of the Branch Library. I-95 is heavily used and plans are in the works to add a 3rd lane. There are plans also to widen 610 to 4 lanes since it is projected that it will serve as a major collector for the 610 growth area and traffic is expected to be almost doubled in five years.

Public transportation is limited. Colonial Transit has some commuter buses to the Washington area. Trailways and Greyhound provide service four times a day. Consequently Stafford residents are highly dependent upon the automobile, not only for work, but also for shopping and general family needs.

Population

Much of the information in this analysis is based on the 1970 census. In view of the record growth of Stafford County, it is recommended that interpretation of much of the data be delayed until the

1980 census.

In three areas, however, we were able to work with updated census information due to figures provided by the Stafford Planning Office and the Rappahannock Area Development Commission.

A. Population Growth:

In 1970, the population of Stafford County was 24,587. In 1977 it had risen to 36,376 which represents a 48% increase. In 1976-77 alone, the increase was 29%. In North Stafford, the population in 1970 was 7,651 and in 1977 13,011, representing a 70% increase. The year 1976-77 showed a 33% increase. In this year also, North Stafford comprised 36% of Stafford County's total population.

It is obvious from these figures, that we are faced with a mushrooming population. The most rapid growth is, and will undoubtably continue to be, in the North Stafford area, which, based on the number of building permits (1,675 in 7 years), is serving as a spillover from Prince William County and Washington suburbia in general. Eighty percent of Stafford workers commute outside the area, since commercial opportunities are limited in the County. Commuting pattern data indicates that 49% of the commuters drive north to Prince William County and the general Washington area, 30% to Fredericksburg, and 21% to other areas including Richmond. These patterns lead us to RECOMMENDATION # 1:

that the hours of the Branch reflect the commuting pattern and the area dependence on the automobile.

Expansion from the initial 40 hours a week, which includes Saturdays and one evening, should probably include additional evenings or hours open until 6:30 or 7:00.

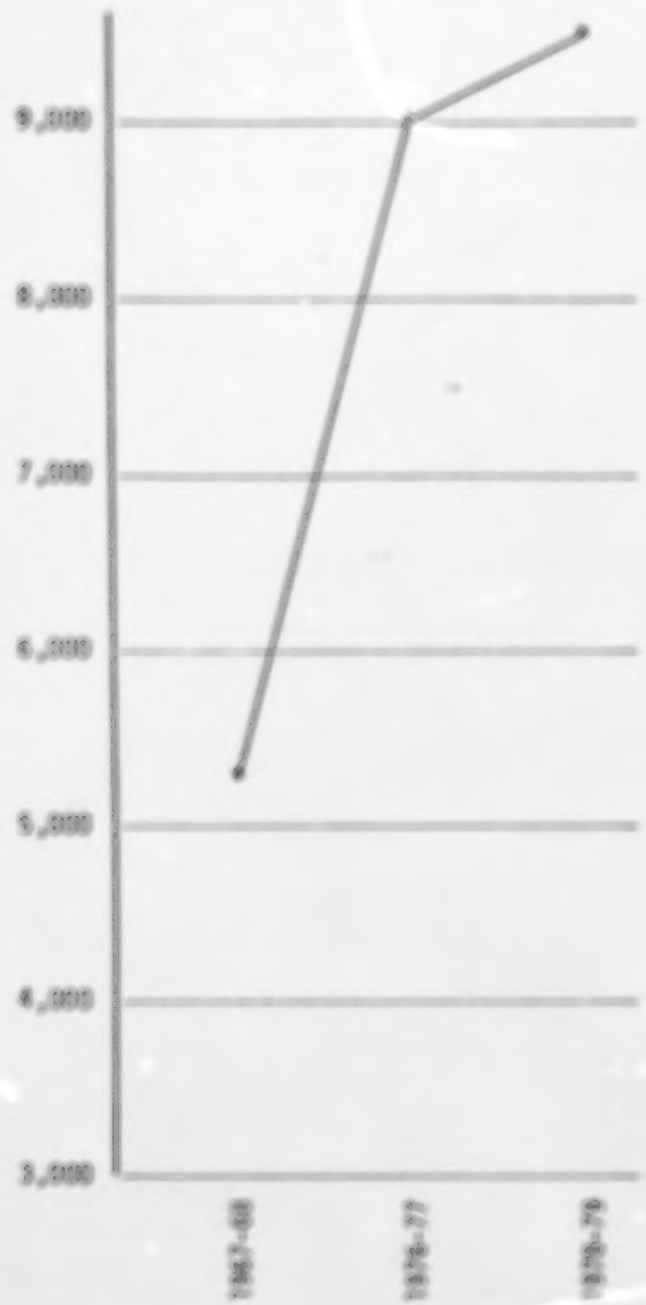
B. School Enrollment (see chart)

Between 1967-68 and 1976-77, Stafford school enrollment increased 71%. In January 1978, the total enrollment was 9,016. 9,500 is projected for 1978-79 which represents a 5% increase or about 400 more pupils a year. According to a projection by Stafford County Planning Office, the ten years from 70/71 to 80/81 will show an increase of 60% in high school enrollment and 26% in the elementary school. Although these school figures are not broken down for North Stafford, it is obvious from the previous analysis of the population, that a high percentage of this growth is in the North Stafford area. This leads to RECOMMENDATION # 2:

That the collection (both general and reference) and the programming reflect the projected proportionate increase in high school enrollment.

C. Median Family Income (see chart)

The 1970 census showed Stafford County 5% below the median family income for the State of Virginia with 8% below the poverty level. The projected median family income for 1980 is almost 5% above the state level, with a probable decrease in poverty percentage. The median family income for Stafford in 1977 was $12,900. These figures show that Stafford is a relatively well-to-do county and all signs point to a continuation of this


9,0000
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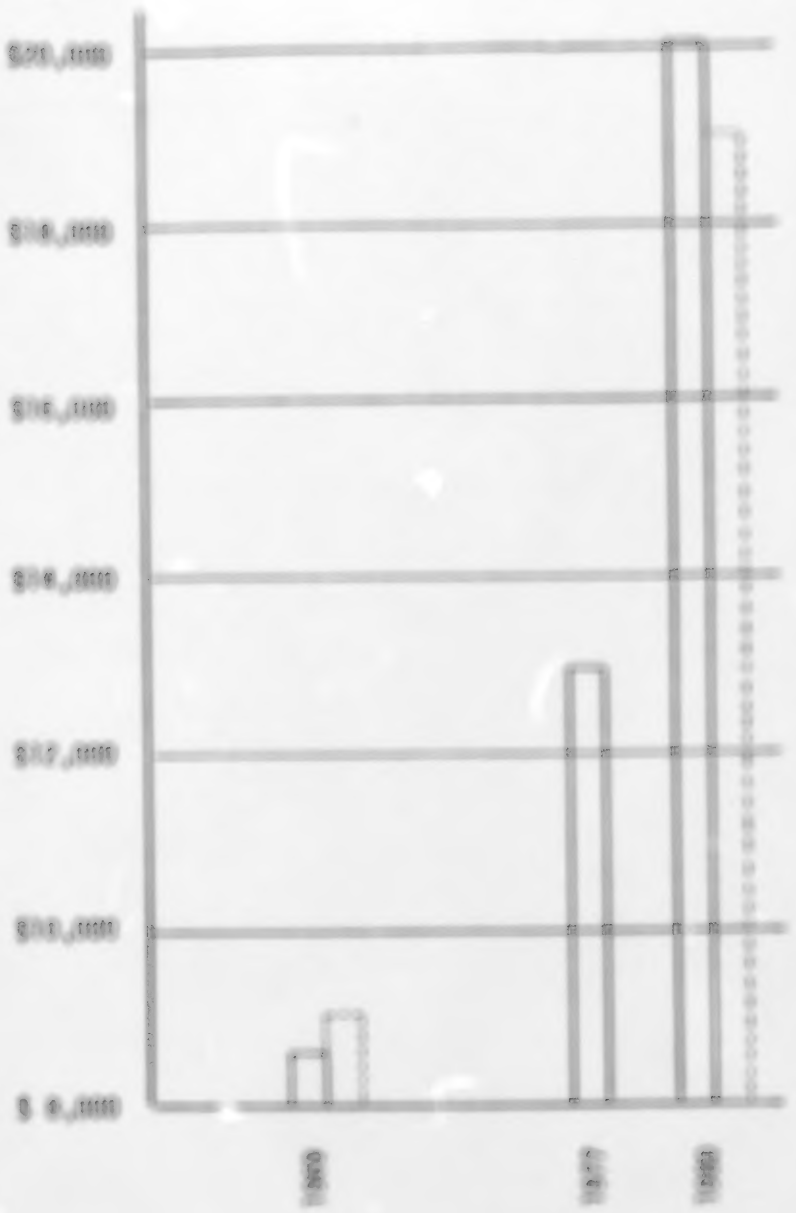
1967-68
1976-77
1978-79
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
Stafford County



Stafford County
State of Virginia

state. Such a base augers well for the future of library service.

Schools

Stafford County is divided into 6 elementary attendance areas which are served by 6 (K-6) schools. Three attendance areas in northern, central, and southern parts of the County are served by three middle schools (7-8). One high school located on 627 in the south central section of the county houses all grades (9-12) at present and will continue to do so until a second high school is constructed in the northern part of the County in 1981. The high school will be located about 2 1/2 miles from the Brench Library. One of the 6 elementary schools is located within yards of the Brench. The proximity of these two schools to the Library leads to RECOMMENDATION # 3:

> *that the guidelines for school-branch library cooperation be very carefully spelled out, and that new areas of cooperation, such as coordination of in-service education, be explored.*

Mass Media:

The area is served by three local newspapers. The largest and oldest is the Free Lance Star with a daily circulation of 27,000. The Tri-County Times is a two month old weekly that circulates throughout the county. The Potomac News, which includes a column on North Stafford, is published five days a week in Prince William County. It's circulation in Stafford County is basically confined to the northern portion of the county. All these papers are used by the library as

publicity outlets.

The Washington Post and the Washington Star are both available in the County as are the morning and evening Richmond papers. The New York Times, the New York Daily News and the Baltimore Sun are all available in the area at a Fredericksburg Newstand.

The County is served by two local radio stations WFVA and WFLS, both of which provide required FCC community programming and announcements. The library has maintained good relationships with both and has utilized the outlets for both publicity and public relations purposes. Richmond and Washington, D.C. stations are also recieved in the area.

Television reception in the southern end of the county is aided by cablevision which brings twelve channels into the area including Richmond, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore stations. The northern end of the county, with the use of antennas receives Washington, D.C., and Richmond stations.

Recreation

The City of Fredericksburg has six movie theatres and one drive-in which serve Stafford residents. The Stafford County Parks and Recreation Commission provides a full range of seasonal craft classes. They also sponsor a summer sports program.

In recent years the county has opened Curtis Memorial Park, a 532 acre facility at the Southern end of the county. The park includes tennis courts, swimming pool, picnic areas and nature trails. At the northern end of the county is Chopawamsic Park, an 85.5 acre facility which includes a multipurpose ballfield. There are two fishing lakes in the county and one beach facility.

Cultural Activities

Fredericksburg is the center for most area cultural events. If the region can be said to have an emphasis or focus, it is undoubtedly historical.

There are nine historical museums in the area. Chatham Manor, which currently serves as the National Park Service Headquarters is the only one located in Stafford County. An art gallery is located in Fredericksburg which is affiliated with tne Virginia Museum and provides for both guest and local exhibitions.

Mary Washington College provides many of the cultural activities available in the area through its sponsorship of an annual concert series that brings nationally known performers to the college. The college drama and music departments also sponsor productions which are open to the general public. The Fredericksburg Summer Theatre, a community theatre group working through the college ,is in its second season. It presents three productions during the summer months.

The Stafford Parks and Recreation Department has in the past sponsored a summer theatre group which travels around the County with its productions.

Educational Opportunities

Mary Washington College, an independent state institution, once the Women's College of the University of Virginia, has in recent years increased its evening courses. This has been the result of a change in administration which brought with it a new emphasis on community outreach. Within the past two years the college has initiated a new Liberal Arts diploma which allows older citizens to convert work experience to college credits. Germanna Community College, twenty miles outside of Fredericksburg, also offers a number of evening

courses at various locations throughout the community. The University of Virginia offers a number of courses at the masters level under its extension program.

All the school systems in the area offer evening courses including adult basic education, during the fall and spring semesters. Cross county participation in these programs is permitted thus giving the individual a wide choice of both vocational and academic classes from which to choose.

Groups

The League of Women Voters conducted a mail survey of 100 organizations in the area. Of those contacted, thirty-four responded, for a return of 34 percent.

Groups identified for the survey included those with regional membership as well as those with exclusively Stafford membership. The difficulty of identifying interaction between the City and the County is again emphasized by the fact that regional organizations do not keep membership records of county residency. The questionnaire queried the groups regarding the purpose of their organization, the meeting dates and times, and sponsorship of any sub-groups. Groups were also asked to make recommendations for library service that might be beneficial to them.

Groups were catagorized by type of organization. Chart # A shows number of responses and the membership number for each catagory. Recreation, which includes the YMCA, reported the largest membership at 2,000. Historical groups showed the second highest membership reflecting a basic interest in the area which considers itself and its surrounding community as the country's most historic city.

The hospital auxiliary, the fire department and the rescue squad have the third highest membership. Mary Washington Hospital auxiliary reported a membership of 500. The fact that it is the only hospital in the area probably accounts for the strong community support. Stafford County has a small paid fire department and no paid rescue people. This explains the interest and participation in citizen groups devoted to this purpose.

A question concerning meeting dates and times showed groups meeting each day of the week. We were therefore not able to draw conclusions concerning possible evening hours for the North Stafford Branch based on survey information.

Of the twenty-eight respondents who made suggestions regarding library services six were completely satisfied with existing service. Suggestions for service included provision of a meeting room, use of the library as a centralized publicity outlet for group activities, and purchase of material on group interests. The YMCA expressed interest in cooperative programming, which leads to RECOMMENDATION # 4:

that our initial programming in North Stafford strongly reflect cooperation with the existing clubs and interest groups in the area.

Some of the groups suggested services the library already provides such as library speakers for groups, equipment for loan, bibliographies. This points out the need for more publicity to familiarize the community with existing library service.

Commercial

There are twenty-three major employers in the Stafford area. Of

Chart "A"

Group Membership

Type	Number of Groups Responding	Membership
Service	6	432
Historic	3	991
Business	4	474
Womens	3	271
Health/Welfare	5	564
Garden	2	Council Represents ten clubs
Veterans	2	483
Hospital/Fire	3	830
Recreation	6	2,176

these, twelve are in construction related industries emphasizing the current pattern of growth in the County. This growth pattern is also pointed up by the fact that in addition to a planning commission the county has created an Industrial Development Authority to aid both in attracting industry and in its orderly development and location.

Future Development in General

From the fore-going it is clear that in all aspects, Stafford, and North Stafford particularily, are growing and will continue to grow in the foreseeable future. The hours open will obviously have to expand, as already mentioned, and the expansion of the facility itself is discussed on p.17.

LIBRARY

a. Resources

History

The Wallace Library was founded in the early part of the century with the legacy left in the will of Colonel Wistar Wallace. From then until 1969, this Library served the citizens of Fredericksburg and some citizens of the surrounding counties of Spotsylvania and Stafford. In 1969 the Virginia State Library, using Federal funds, set up a regional system with the Wallace collection as a core. This was the last "demonstration" library in the State and for two years gave free service to the four counties - Spotsylvania, Stafford, Westmoreland, Caroline and the City of Fredericksburg. At the end of this period, the jurisdictions agreed to provide local support on a per capita basis according to a Contract. Since 1971, the Library has grown in both usage and programming. In addition to the original two bookmobiles, the

Library has added a story telling van and two branches, the second being the North Stafford Branch.

Organization/Staff

The Library is a political unit as defined by a Contract signed by all the jurisdictions. Policy making power is vested in a Board of Trustees who are appointed by the governing bodies of each jurisdiction for not more than two consecutive four year terms. The City of Fredericksburg has two members to one for each of the counties. Since the Main Library is located in the City, this jurisdiction pays double per capita. The Trustees act as a political liason between the Library and the localities, but the Board has autonomy in terms of policies and actual budget allocation.

The Library is administered by a director who is appointed by the Board. The staff currently consists of five professional librarians and eighteen full time equivalents.

The responsibility for branches is divided between the jurisdiction and the Board. The expense for the facility itself and the utilities are assumed by the county, while the materials and staff are provided by the Main Library.

Budget

76% of the total budget is from local sources on a per capita basis. The Library depends heavily on State and Federal aid for the purchase of books and materials. The Board and Staff work presently with a line item budget, but a program budget has been developed in the last year as a management tool and to give further insight into expenditures.

Facilities

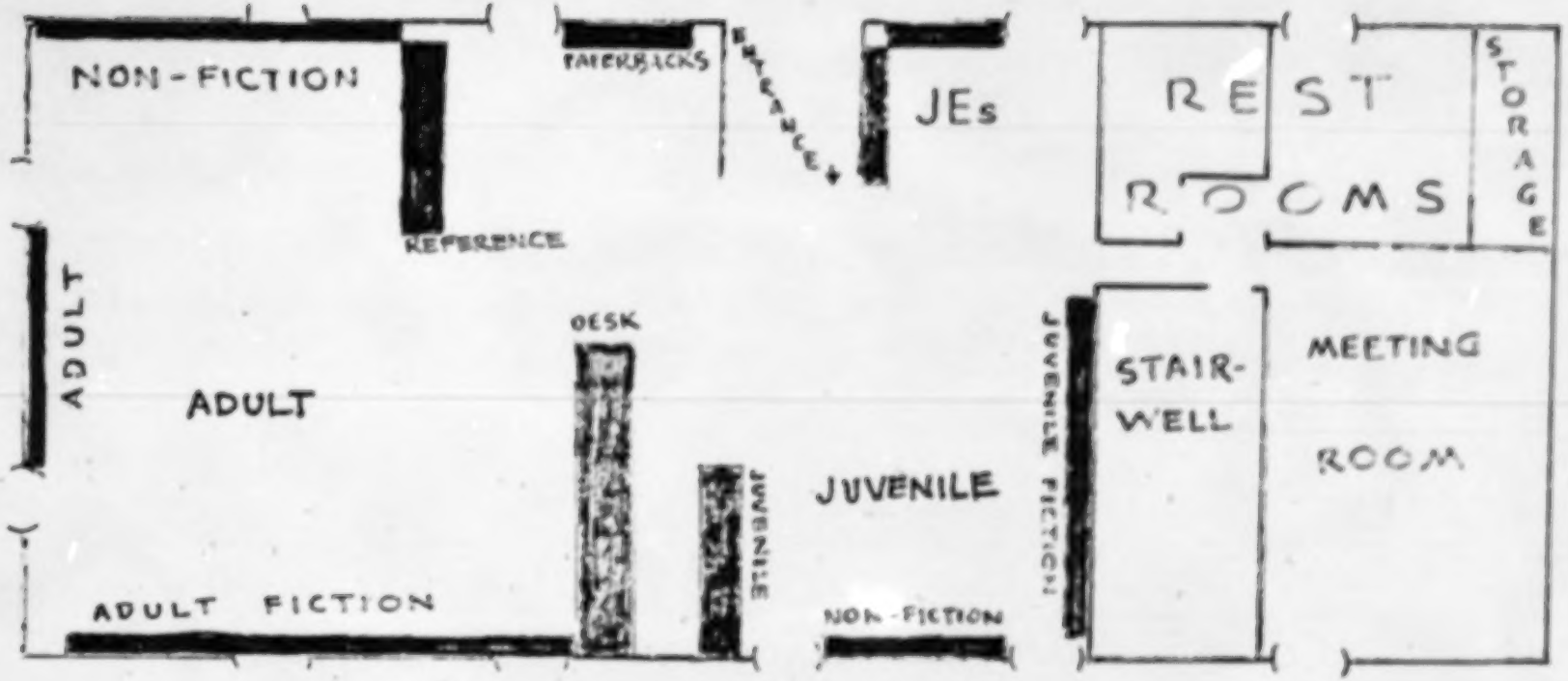
The Main Library is housed in an old school building and at the present occupies all of the first floor and several rooms in the basement. According to both State Standards and a space feasibility study done by a local architect, the actual current square footage is woefully inadequate. This is particularily true in the area occupied by the Extension Department. In organizing books and materials for the new Branch, the staff has labored under a severe hardship. The situation, since the main growth will be in branch developement, will continue to deteriorate. This leads to RECOMMENDATION # 5:

that priority be given by the Library Board, to the renovation and/or expansion of the Main Library facility in order to keep pace with the needs of the North Stafford Branch and any other branches either current or projected.

The North Stafford Branch Library, which occupies the middle floor of a newly constructed building in an office park, contains approximately 1,800 square feet. (See attached floor plan.) This includes a small meeting room for both library and community use. The current shelving allows for a collection of about 6,000 volumes. Two full time staff members (one a CETA employee), with the help of trained volunteers, will man the Branch. County officials recognize the fact that within two to three years the Branch will have to be greatly expanded to meet the demands of this rapidly growing population. This leads to RECOMMENDATION # 6:

that the Library Board and Staff work closely with County officials to expand the Branch to 8,000 square feet within 3-4 years.

NORTH STAFFORD BRANCH LIBRARY



SCALE: 1/8" = 1'0"

Registration

The Central Rappahannock Regional Library currently has 25,263 registered borrowers. Stafford County has 8,195 or 32.44% of the total. The registration file is kept current by continuous weeding.

For this study the registration file was sampled using the Institute tools. Because our file is not broken down by jurisdiction, we had to adapt the technique to our system. The interval was determined and counted off. If the 66th card was a Stafford registration, it was pulled for the sample, if not, we proceeded to the next Stafford card.

When analyzed, our sample corresponded to the make up that Berelson found in his study. Adult female registrants outnumbered males 46% to 25%. Juvenile males made up 16% as compared to 12% for juvenile females. Of the total juvenile sample 5% were under 6 years. 46.5% were 6 to 8 years and 48.5% were 9 to 11 years. This underlines the need for increased programming for the school-age population.

The sample was then plotted on a map by enumeration district. 26% of the total sample was located in the eleven enumeration districts comprising North Stafford. 36.2% of the North Stafford sample was in the enumeration district in which the North Stafford Branch is located. These findings reinforce the decision to establish a branch in this particular area. The percentage of North Stafford registrations falls below the North Stafford percentage of the total county population (36%) which indicates that past service has been either inadequate or unavailable to these citizens. In addition, the 36.2% registration sample represents the

highest number of registrations in the North Stafford enumeration districts.

Collection

The Library currently has 100,000 volumes, 65,000 adult and 35,000 juvenile. The collection includes 2,500 records and 200 periodical subscriptions and a small collection of 8mm films.

Circulation for the system in FY 77/78 was 372,555. This represents an increase of 6.2% over last year and 63.9% increase over the past five years. The Main Library circulation for the past year was 269,108. Of this Stafford County accounted for 28.78%.

Charts comparing the age of the collection with circulation appear on the following pages. An analysis of these, however, is subject to the special circumstances of our library system. The collection is made up of an original 17,000 volumes from the Wallace Library, a great portion of which have been reduced by attrition. The collection is and was purchased by professional librarians using the standard selection tools to create a well-rounded collection. The selection since then, has been built on this foundation, so that it is reasonably safe to say that at this time the balance of the collection is not in contention regardless of imprint date. In addition, since almost 90% of the collection is new, age of the books is not a significant factor. This is pointed out by the fact that in 1977, a full 50% of the books with pre-1951 imprint dates circulated. To maintain this balance the library has implemented a weeding/evaluation schedule to insure continuous evaluation of the collection. The aforementioned basic strengths of the collection

Chart "B"

ADULT FICTION
Book circulation data

Imprint	never	pre 1972	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979 to date
pre 1951	7,895	7,895	2,635		5,260		10,530	505	2,635	5,260
1951-55						7,895	23,685	53,855		
1956-60						7,895	7,895	79,029	2,855	
1961-65			3,855			11,345	19,235	53,855	11,345	
1966-70		2,885			6,175	6,175	8,335	56,255	10,675	6,175
1971-75		2,55			2,55	55	22,55	855	12,55	12,55
1976-79								29,575	29,575	29,575
Total	1,515	2,535	1,015		2,535	5,055	13,695	53,035	10,15	5,055

Chart "C"

ADULT NON-FICTION
Book circulation data

Imprint	never	pre 1972	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979 to date
pre 1951		13,355				7,695	7,695	30,955	3,955	3,955
1951-55			55		55		155	355		
1956-60	2,795	11,115		2,795	5,555	2,795	11,115	33,335	11,115	2,795
1961-65	1,895	7,895	3,795	5,695		5,695	18,975	63,95		5,695
1966-70	5,135	3,855		3,855	1,285	5,135	10,15	57,855	3,855	1,285
1971-75	1,355			1,355	4,455	9,955	18,925	68,655	2,75	2,75
1976-79								67,955	13,535	11,755
Total	2,35	3,955	0,955	2,635	2,35	5,335	10,675	67,55	6,675	3,295

Sheet "D"

JAMOKALE/KOSOI

Tank circulation data

Segment	Upward slope	Pre 1972	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	Actual 1978	1978 Pr slope
pre 1951								66,675	16,675	6,335
1951-55								64,675		20,335
1956-60								40,000		28,575
1961-65								27,765		11,115
1966-70					58		58	658	158	158
1971-75								87,995		65,775
1976-78										
Total					1,835		1,835	94,995	8,995	19,735

Sheet "E"

JAMOKALE KISTSOB

Tank circulation data

Segment	Upward slope	Pre 1972	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	Actual 1978	1978 Pr slope
pre 1951		5,295		5,295		5,295	10,595	40,715	10,595	
1951-55				14,295		7,195	14,295	62,895	14,295	
1956-60			5,895	5,895	5,895		11,595	55,895	11,595	
1961-65		7,695				5,395	10,595	66,675	5,135	
1966-70		3,235		6,895		16,135	3,235	87,995	5,895	3,235
1971-75						5,895	11,595	73,995	7,695	5,895
1976-78								11055		
Total		3,19	5,625	5,735	5,625	5,595	9,329	97,749	8,79	1,295

Chart "F"

JUVENILE NON-FICTION
last circulation date

imprint	never circ.	pre 1972	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	total 1978	1978 in circ.
pre 1951	5.55%				5.55%		5.55%	61.11%		5.55%
1951-55					3.85%		3.85%	61.54%	23.08%	3.85%
1956-60	3.85%					7.69%	11.54%	42.31%	23.08%	
1961-65	1.96%	1.96%	1.96%			1.96%	17.65%	37.25%	17.65%	7.84%
1966-70			3.33%	3.33%	5%	1.67%	13.33%	56.67%	1.67%	3.33%
1971-75	2.17%				2.17%	2.17%	13.04%	63.04%	6.52%	6.52%
1976-78	20%							60%	20%	
Total	2.14%	0.43%	1.29%	0.86%	2.59%	2.59%	12.07%	53.02%	11.21%	4.74%

combined with judicious duplication over the past year will allow a North Stafford Branch to be stocked with a well balanced core collection without weakening the Main Library resources. The Library has received a special purpose grant for Stafford Branch books which will allow augmentation of this basic collection.

b. Service

Reference

In FY 77/78 the Library received 11,274 reference questions. Of these 8,869 were adult. This number includes telephone references. The reference staff includes one professional and one part time paraprofessional. The staff receives in-service training and attends state workshops when appropriate.

The collection of approximately 2,000 volumes is inventoried and evaluated bi-annually. In the past three years, the good basic reference collection has been further strengthened through two grants from the Virginia State Library for reference material.

The North Stafford Branch will have an excellent small reference collection with the Main Library collection serving as back up.

Programming

Library programming has greatly increased during the past year. The activities have included both displays and programs. In each of these areas both community and staff resources have been utilized. A special display feature has been the collectors' corner which has allowed the display of collections from individuals in the area.

The Staff designed an evaluation sheet that is distributed after each program allowing an identification of the most effective

publicity sources and the building of community resource files for future events. The Library's increased dedication to programming will also be reflected at the North Stafford Branch. The Library will cooperate closely with established groups in the North Stafford area in planning programs. Programs with origins in the Main Library will be shared with the new Branch.

Bookmobiles

Bookmobile service to Stafford County is pertinent to this analysis. The Library has five separate semi-monthly "runs" into Stafford. There are currently 28 stops, with one of these weekly. Ten of these are in the North Stafford area. One of the criteria for the establishment of a branch library in the 610 area has been sharply escalating bookmobile use. Bookmobile circulation in Stafford has increased 79% since 1970 and most of the North Stafford stops far exceed the recommended 60 books per hour.

Summary

The specific recommendations resulting from this analysis are incorporated in the body of the report. In general it would not be unrealistic to say that the greatest challenge facing the Library as a whole and the North Stafford Branch in particular is to provide and maintain adequate Library service in the face of tremendous County growth.

APPENDIX

A BRIEF STAFFORD COUNTY HISTORY

Prior to its legal establishment as a county in 1664, the area we know as Stafford County today played an interesting role in the development of Virginia. Its early history is one of numerous Indian uprisings and reflections of European wars that created much conflict among Stafford's population.

The first white men believed to reach Stafford were Spanish Jesuit missionaries who settled in 1570 near Aquia Creek. The Indians, whom they had set out to convert to Christianity, soon afterward massacred them.

Later, in 1607-1608 Captain John Smith set out from Jamestown to explore nearby forests and rivers. He wanted to satisfy his own curiosity, to locate supplies for the settlement, and, perhaps, to search for the imaginary Northwest Passageway to the Pacific Ocean. During several of his scouting expeditions, he visited Stafford shores and described the area as a land of "sweet rivers and springs and plentiful hills." However, his party also experienced several Indian attacks. They escaped total destruction because of a knowledgeable and protective Indian guide, Mosco, who was thought to be a Spanish half-breed.

In his journals, Captain Smith refers to the Aquia Creek area as the home of the King's House of the Potowameke (Potomac) Indians. About 1610, a disagreement developed between Powhatan, as head of the Powhatan confederation that included most of the Indians in Virginia, and Japazaws, the King of the Potomacs. As a pledge of his good faith, Powhatan sent his daughter, Pocahontas, to the Japazaws. She remained with Japazaws and the Potomac Indians in Stafford County until 1612 when a British commander, Captain Argyle, bribed the chief with a shiny copper kettle. The Potomac chief believed Argyle's promise to deliver Pocahontas safely to her father. Upon arrival in Jamestown, Argyle sent a list of demands to Powhatan in return for the release of his daughter. Powhatan replied that he loved his daughter, but he refused to meet the demands. Finally, Pocahontas was returned to her father. While a prisoner in Jamestown, she met and fell in love with John Rolfe whom she later married.

In 1647, Giles Brent and his followers set up the first lasting settlement in Stafford County. Fleeing several involved political situations, Brent and his Indian wife, Kittamaquad, landed at the mouth of Aquia Creek and began to build the town of Aquia. Gradually, the Brents bought more land and, thus, firmly established a Catholic settlement in Virginia. Aquia survived perhaps because Kittamaquad was a Piscataway Indian Princess and/or because Brent welcomed and

aided other refugees from the religious wars of Europe. Although a Catholic, Brent was broadly tolerant. For instance, he welcomed the Anglican Cavaliers who fled England during Oliver Cromwell's rule. Later, French Huguenots escaping persecution by Roman Catholics found a pleasant haven in Stafford County's Aquia settlement.

In 1664, Stafford County was officially established. At that time, the roles listed 600 titheables (taxable persons), that is, males above 21 years of age, including slaves and indentured men. Hence, the total population is estimated to have been around 3,000 people, excluding Indians. Created from northeastern Westmoreland County and named for Staffordshire, England, Stafford County then included all Virginia land that drained into the Potomac River from Westmoreland County to the Blue Ridge Mountains. Eventually, the counties of Prince William, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Alexandria, and Arlington were formed from the original Stafford land. Moreover, Stafford County did not take on its present geographical appearance until 1772.

The town of Marlborough was established in 1667 and thrived as a merchant and shipping center. In 1691, Marlborough was officially a town, known for its salt herring. The first court house was probably located at Marlborough Point. After it burned, the town began its decline and never returned to its earlier prosperity.

The late 17th century found Stafford County embroiled in two major conflicts. The first involved the Doeg Indian attacks on Stafford County residents that precipitated Bacon's Rebellion. Forts were later built on the "frontiers" to guard against Indian attacks. The second incident began when King James II, a Catholic, ascended the throne of England. The Rev. John Waugh, pastor of two prominent Stafford County parishes, began an anti-Catholic crusade from his pulpit that developed into an incendiary situation within the county. He preached that the Maryland Catholics were arming to invade Virginia and that first they would incite the Stafford Indians to massacre the people. He shouted, "The Papists are coming!" until the cry echoed throughout most of Virginia. George Brent, Giles Brent's son, and the Catholic Aquia settlement were in grave danger. Open warfare was averted by the "Bloodless Revolution" of 1688 when Protestant King William and Queen Mary took the English throne from the Catholic James II. Parson Waugh was reprimanded for these actions and for other church-related inconsistencies.

Stafford prospered in the 18th century. Trade and new industry grew at a very fast pace. In 1720, Falmouth was formally laid out by a Major William Todd. Located at the falls of the Rappahannock and at the intersection of two important roads--one running north and south and the other leading westward to the Valley of Virginia. Falmouth soon became a bustling trade center with streets lined with bulging warehouses. A center for inland transportation as well as a port for foreign countries, the Falmouth-Fredericksburg area became the 10th largest colonial shipping center in North America and carried on direct trade with England, Continental Europe, and the West Indies. (Supposedly, the Rappahannock was twice as deep and wide as it is today.)

Likewise, Stafford's population increased at this time. Industry and trade brought in both laborers and skilled craftsmen. Large plantations existed beside small farms. Among the influential Stafford citizens were the Fitzhughs, the Masons, the Moncures, and the Washingtons.

The Moncure family has played a lasting role in the history of Aquia Church. The Rev. John Moncure served as the parish's rector for 26 years and was instrumental in getting the Aquia Church erected in 1751. Destroyed by fire in the same year as its construction, the church was rebuilt in 1757. It has the shape of a Greek cross with two tiers of windows set into the thick brick and sandstone walls. Indeed, Aquia Church with its square pews, three level pulpit, and flagstone aisles is one of the loveliest of colonial American churches. The church has been threatened with destruction during three wars--The American Revolution, The War of 1812, and The Civil War. In each case, the communion service of the church, a memorial to the Rev. Alexander Scott, second rector of the parish, was buried as a precautionary measure; it is still used at services. Members of the parish as well as descendants of John Moncure have donated money to repair the church from time to time. (Tradition has it that several ghost stories are associated with the Aquia Church.)

An interesting legend also surrounds Chatham, the great Georgian Mansion built by William Fitzhugh in 1768 and recently deeded to the National Park Service by the late John Lee Pratt. In the 1700's an English girl was brought to Virginia by her father to thwart a romance between the girl and a taxidermist. The father hoped to marry off his daughter in America. On reaching America, they were entertained by many of their friends and were invited to join a house party at Chatham. The girl mourned the absence of her taxidermist. However, he had followed the girl

to Virginia and found her at Chatham where he communicated with her without her father's knowledge. An elopement was planned. Meanwhile, her father's friend, George Washington, learned of the plot and agreed to end it. Washington had the taxidermist locked up; and when the girl on the appointed night descended from her room by a ladder, she was received by a stern George Washington. The father hurried her back to England where he married her off to a man of his choosing. But on her deathbed, June 21, 1790, she vowed to return to Chatham's Lady's Walk every seven years on the anniversary of her death.

In mid 18th century, Stafford readied for the French and Indian War. Although few Indian skirmishes actually touched the county borders, Stafford militia, one company commanded by George Washington, were sent to the front.

Ironically, the French and Indian War may have benefited Stafford County, particularly The Hunter Iron Works. Officially named the Rappahannock Forge, it grew with the increased demands for its products in the 1750's. Thus, by the time of the American Revolution, Hunter Iron Works was one of the largest in America and was able to cope with the needs of the war. Muskets, anchors, pots, kettles, bayonets, and even wire were made there. An active patriot, Mr. Hunter sought state aid to enlarge his plant and secure new mines in order to keep up his production. Patrick Henry stated, "What must strongly recommend Mr. Hunter is, that he asks for no pecuniary assistance for himself, rather merely for materials for work. He requires only what the good of the state most evidently points out, which is to open the mines within the same, and not to depend upon our neighbors for so necessary an article as iron." Some assistance was granted to him.

Early in 1781, the British swept into Virginia and the threat to Stafford County, especially to Hunter's Iron Works and the Fredericksburg Gunnery, was quite real. General George Weedon, the Irish innkeeper of a tavern in Fredericksburg, was called on to recruit more troops and enlarge his camp. Shortly thereafter, he was encamped at "Camp Hunter" with more than 1800 men.

At that time Cornwallis was commanding the British army in Virginia. He dispatched Tarleton's Cavalry toward Fredericksburg to capture the iron works. As the British advanced, Falmouth and Fredericksburg were evacuated and Hunter's Iron Works partially dismantled. General Weedon's Company crossed the Rappahannock and positioned themselves along the general line of Marye's Heights where he prepared to meet the British. However, Tarleton turned toward Charlottesville and

captured some members of the General Assembly who had fled there from Richmond. Hence, by luck of war, the town, Hunter's Iron Works and the Fredericksburg Gunnery were spared. Weedon's force withdrew to Camp Hunter where they remained until joining in the Battle of Yorktown. After the war, the town of Falmouth billed the state for damages to the Ferry made by Weedon's troops.

In December, 1781, after the war had ended, James Hunter wrote to the Governor. His iron works had closed and his workmen had been discharged. It appears that he had not been encouraged after the war ended and/or was another victim of the panic that swept eastern Virginia after the war.

After the Constitution had been ratified and a decision to found Washington, D.C. was reached, the Federal City Commissioners purchased land from George Brent in the Aquia region for a quarry. Tremendous amounts of freestone (Aquia sandstone) were mined at Aquia for the government buildings in D.C. Stonemasons and stonecutters were imported from Europe for the task.

In 1794 a young immigrant named George Blagden went to work at Aquia. In the following 30 years, as superintendent of the quarry, he contributed more to the building of the U. S. Capitol than any man before or since. While architects Thornton, Latrobe, Bulfinch, and others, commissioners, presidents and congressmen battled over design and costs, Blagden went about his own business of digging and laying the stone. Like the Capitol and Mt. Vernon, the White House, too, is made of Aquia freestone and brick.

By 1830, Congress began another wave of building Federal government offices. A debate ensued as to the use of Aquia freestone vs. marble. Freestone lost out and Aquia fell into a century-long slumber that was disturbed only by Civil War guns.

The lumber industry boomed in the 19th century because of the invention of the cross-cut saw and the development of the railroads. The saw was driven by the power from a mill wheel. Thus, "saw-mills" came into being and were run from ponds and canals just as were the flour and meal mills. As the water mills improved, a new invention appeared on the scene--steam. Steam engines began to take the place of the old water wheels and were combined with a circular saw to increase lumber production. The railroad needed lumber for its ties. The R. F. & P. Railroad was begun in 1837 and finally reached Aquia Creek in 1854. There, railroad cargo and passengers transferred to steamers on the Potomac that carried them north.

In addition, the county enjoyed a brisk fish trade as Stafford fish, especially the salt herring, were recognized as among the best in the world. Catches were very large, rarely did the huge nets come back with less than 100,000 herring.

Basil Gordon, often thought to be the first millionaire in the United States, arrived in Virginia a poor boy, but later made his fortune through trade and trade related endeavors in Falmouth. Throughout his later life he wore a powdered wig, ruffled shirt, flowing white cravat, knee-breeches, dress coat, and shoe buckles. Mr. Moncure D. Conway, also a 19th century Falmouth native, describes Mr. Gordon's rise to wealth in his book, Autobiography Memories & Experiences:

"He had in youth set up a small store for the sale of various articles, and earned money enough to purchase wheat brought in from the rich Piedmont region; he had it made into flour in the Falmouth mill, and shipped it on the Rappahannock for England. When a fortune was thus made, his family wished him to give up the tiny shop. He kept it in order to give employment to many of his young relatives who had to be started in business.

It was a practical joke among wags to watch the hour when the gentleman visited the store, and the clerks were off at his large warehouse, to go in and call for some trifle--such as a half pound of sugar or coffee--which the venerable millionaire would weigh out with gravity and dignity...

Basil Gordon was well acquainted with Martha Washington. It was told that he had been a pallbearer at her funeral. Also, when her monument was to be erected at Fredericksburg, he identified the spot where she was buried."

In 19th century, Stafford again felt the destruction of wars. Although the War of 1812 threatened Stafford shores on several occasions, very little actual destruction took place. British marines anchored in Potomac Creek near Marlborough and ransacked Potomac Church and nearby Aquia Church. No other damage was recorded.

On the other hand, the Civil War crippled Stafford County for years after the war. Throughout the war, one army or another occupied Stafford soil. No sooner than Virginia's secession was announced than the Federals tried to land on Stafford shores and the Confederates under General Daniel Ruggles rushed in to repel the invaders. In 1862, the Federal General McDowell encamped in Stafford as he marched toward Richmond to reinforce General McClellan's army during the Peninsula Campaign. McDowell took Fredericksburg and established his headquarters at Chatham where he was visited by President Lincoln.

In August 1862, General Robert E. Lee led the Confederate Army northward to meet the Federal Army of General John Pope at the second Battle of Manassas. When Pope was defeated, Stafford again became a Confederate stronghold.

However, after the Battle of Antietam, the Federal General Ambrose Burnside pushed southward to the Rappahannock shores and occupied all of Stafford County. Delayed by the late arrival of his pontoon bridges, Burnside did not begin his attack on Fredericksburg until December 13, 1862. Repulsed by General Lee's forces on Marye's Heights, Burnside retreated to Stafford for the winter. During this time, General Joseph Hooker replaced Burnside as commander of the U.S. Army.

In May, 1863, General Hooker planned to outmaneuver General Lee by attacking him from the rear as well as the front. However, his plan backfired at Chancellorsville, where he was pushed back across the Rappahannock River into Stafford County. Again, Stafford County was stripped of food and resources.

The county had a brief reprieve when both major armies were fighting at Gettysburg. Yet, soon after, Federal troops again occupied Stafford terrain. General George Meade's Army of the Potomac fought at Wilderness and Spotsylvania and pursued the Confederate Army southward. After the surrender, men and goods traveled through Stafford on their way home.

At the end of 1865, the county was incredibly devastated--devoid of livestock, forage, crops. Tremendous effort was required to eke a living from the abused soil. Yet, the hardy Staffordians survived, rebuilt, and eventually prospered once more.

In 1916, the internationally acclaimed artist, Gari Melchers, moved into the 18th century Stafford County estate, Belmont. Built by Rev. John Dixon in 1761 to overlook the Rappahannock River, the home has been added to by later residents. The Melchers refurbished the main house and added acreage to the estate. By building the large stone studio at Belmont and by maintaining a studio in New York City, Mr. Melchers continued to paint up to his death in 1932.

Upon Mrs. Melcher's death in 1955, ownership of Belmont passed to the state to be operated by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts as "The Gari Melchers Memorial Art Center." However, the museum felt that the purposes of the memorial could be accomplished better if administered by a state agency closer to Belmont. Hence, Mary Washington College became the trustees of the property. Belmont is now open to the public for tours of the house, grounds, and studio.

In 1920, an Alexandria company reopened the Aquia quarries and briefly revived the usage of freestone in public buildings and large homes. However, the Great Depression soon brought a halt to this venture as well as many others in Stafford County.

In 1943, the present Falmouth bridge across the Rappahannock was built for $55,000. Steel used in the construction was obtained by special permission from the War Department. The bridge replaced one that was heavily damaged by the raging waters of the October, 1942 flood. Since the new bridge was built at a higher elevation than the old one, some of Falmouth's older businesses suffered. However, much restoration is taking place in that area now.

In 1950, the Mayor of Falmouth, England visited Stafford County's Falmouth and was welcomed with a series of activities to honor the occasion. He was received by St. Clair Brooke, a local stonemason, historian and poet who was considered to be the unofficial Mayor of Falmouth. Beloved by rich and poor alike, Mr. Brooke was considered an authority on local history and always delighted in talking about Falmouth and its heritage. In fact, when the Mayor of Falmouth, England addressed a letter to "His Worship the Mayor of Falmouth, Virginia," the letter was delivered without delay to St. Clair Brooke. A 75 acre recreational park located near St. Clair Brooke home is named in his honor.

Today, Stafford County encompasses 277 square miles and has an estimated population of 33,000. As a developing rural county, it is ideally located about halfway between two large urban centers--Washington, D.C. to the north and Richmond to the south. While other areas in Virginia have reached a population plateau or have declined in numbers, Stafford County continues to grow at a rapid pace. New shopping centers, sub-developments, office parks and a high school are scheduled for construction in the near future. Stafford County is now pursuing its future.

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